



# Chambers's Journal

## SIXTH SERIES.

### DEAD REPUTATIONS.

**I**N one of his latest works, Landor consoled himself for the comparative neglect which he suffered from his contemporaries with the prediction that he should dine late, but in a room well lighted, and with guests select and few. We do not remember any instance of a popular author consoling himself, in an opposite fashion, with the assurance that, however he might fare with posterity, he had at least dined well and heartily in his own day. On the contrary, ephemeral fame is commonly regarded as a kind of reproach, like the mundane prosperity of Dives in the parable, who had his good things in his lifetime, and was afterwards tormented. The man who immediately engages the public attention is apt, unless he succeeds in permanently retaining it, to be set down as a sort of impostor, thriving at the expense of more modest men of genius who assert themselves quietly in the course of time. Yet surely this is somewhat too harsh a judgment. If to please posterity be an object of laudable and heroic ambition, it cannot be a crime simply to delight one's contemporaries. Otherwise we should be quite too much under the tyranny of our descendants, who, as some one has said not impertinently, have after all done nothing for us. At all events there would be no lack of respectable examples for any author who on his deathbed should console himself by thinking, not that his works would outlast brass and marble, but that they had already been proved worth a certain weight in honest gold. The history of literature is thick strewed with dead reputations which in their season were no sham growth, but genuine, if deciduous, foliage. In the literary shadow-land there is many a meritorious ghost, which, having feasted well of fame on earth, now sits fasting and deserted, but is not to be treated with contempt by the critical pilgrim merely because it has failed to get admission to the Elysian fields.

Pope's often-quoted question, 'Who now reads  
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Cowley?' points us to one of the most conspicuous of these ghosts. In the reign of Charles II. the author of the  *Davideis*  and the  *Mistress*  was almost universally acknowledged as the foremost genius of his time. Lord Clarendon pronounced him to have 'made a flight beyond all men' in poetry; Milton himself, according to Johnson, ranked him with Spenser and Shakespeare; and his biographer Bishop Sprat declared unhesitatingly that he ought to be classed not only with the principal English writers, but also with the best of the Greeks and Romans of antiquity. Yet no English poet who ever had anything like an equal reputation is so utterly dead as Cowley. The industrious resurrectionists who have disinterred Habington, and Crashaw, and William Browne of Tavistock, have been fain to leave him in the mould of unprinted obscurity; and what shadow of vague and nominal fame he still possesses as a poet is due mainly to the fact that his biography stands first among Johnson's  *Lives* , and contains, in the remarks on the so-called Metaphysical School of Poetry, some of the most vigorous and readable criticism that ever came from the old dictator's pen.

With Cowley, but into yet deeper oblivion, has gone his contemporary, the ingenious Sir William D'Avenant—a man of mark and of many accomplishments in his day. Successor to Ben Jonson in the laureateship, and writer of plays and masques for the court of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, D'Avenant fought for his king against the Roundheads, and achieved the memorable feat of lighting up the Puritan gloom of the Commonwealth with the production of the first English opera. With Dryden he ruled the Restoration theatre, and, like Dryden, he dared to lay sacrilegious hands on Shakespeare's masterpieces—a crime for which one is glad to remember his intercession on behalf of Milton, in the hour of Royalist triumph, as an atonement.

If that expiation be thought insufficient, however, D'Avenant's offence has surely received  
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punishment enough in the melancholy fate of his ponderous epic *Gondibert*, which in English literature is almost the palmary example of complete and hopeless oblivion. Deeper than ever plummet sounded in the depths of forgetfulness have sunk those two thousand monotonous quatrains, with all the names and deeds of their Lombard heroes and heroines: Hurgonil, Astolpho, Borgia, Goltha, Tibalt, Astragon, Hermogild, Ulfino, Orgo, Thula; and only a stray line or two are left floating, to be picked up as rare quotations, like that description of a library as the 'monument of vanished minds.' Isaac D'Israeli certainly contributed to the curiosities of criticism, if not of literature, when he wrote of D'Avenant, as a state prisoner in the time of the Commonwealth, 'awaiting death with his immortal poem in his hand'—a sentence which recalls that unlucky epitaph on poor Robert Pollok's tombstone at Southampton: 'His immortal poem is his monument.' Yet *Gondibert*, in itself no despicable work, had its hour of celebrity if not of popularity. Not merely did it receive the praise of Hobbes—no very good judge of poetry to be sure—but it was also admired by Cowley, who told its author that he had put Italy to shame by showing her conquerors thus

Raised by such powerful verse that ancient Rome  
May blush no less to see her wit o'ercome.

No doubt the length of *Gondibert* has in great part been the death of it, for lengthiness in a poem is apt to produce brevity of life. Very hardly, indeed, shall they that write long poems enter into the kingdom of lasting literary fame. Drayton's interminable *Polyolbion* has done its author no good, and was perhaps very largely responsible for the ignorance displayed by Goldsmith's Chinaman, who, when shown the poet's monument in Westminster Abbey, answered blankly, 'Drayton! I never heard of him before.' Daniel, too, the singer of Delia, might have stood better with posterity if he had not burdened himself with the *Civil Wars of Lancaster and York*. *Hudibras* ranks among the most brilliant examples of immediate success in literature: 'the king quoted, the courtiers studied, and the whole party of Royalists applauded it' when it first appeared. To this day it stands as one of our English classics, yet, if the truth must be told, Samuel Butler's reputation has long been little better than a merely nominal one; and, though his name is not forgotten, his poem, very much no doubt because of the length of its nine or ten straggling cantos, is practically unread.

Of course, however, there is another and more potent reason for the decay of reputation acquired by poems like *Hudibras*. Satire, save of the most general kind, is necessarily more or less ephemeral; and, as a rule, the more popular the satirist is in his own day the more likely he is to be neglected afterwards. Charles

Churchill is a good case in point. That 'comet of a season,' as Byron called him, was perhaps the most prominent literary figure in the years between 1760 and 1764, which resounded far more loudly with the echoes of the *Rosciad* and the *Prophecy of Famine* than with the modest appeal of Goldsmith's *Traveller* and *Citizen of the World*. But while Goldsmith abides as probably the most genuinely popular poet of the eighteenth century, the volumes of Churchill are hardly opened save by students who seek in his panegyrics of Wilkes and his assaults on Bute and Johnson and Hogarth to find illustration of the political and literary history of the early years of George III. A similar motive is all that ever sends any one nowadays to Dr John Wolcot, a burlesque satirist far inferior indeed to Churchill, yet no less popular in his day with our Whiggish and Radical great-grandfathers for his unsparing and indecorous squibs on the laureates, the Court, and the ministers of 'Farmer George.'

Nor does literary satire wear any better than political. The *Pursuits of Literature*, which went through sixteen editions between 1794 and 1812, has vanished along with its author, Mathias, who in an age of duelling discreetly preferred to be known as the editor of Gray; while the *Baviad* and the *Mæviad*, hailed on their appearance as little less than a brace of new *Dunciads*, have perished along with the Laura Marias and Anna Matildas whom they chastised. Gifford himself, the dreaded Aristarchus, or rather Zoilus, of the *Quarterly*, is almost as extinct as Rymer would now be if that elder critic had not by his *Fædera* made himself eternally indispensable to students in a less flowery field than that of the *belles lettres*.

Nobody nowadays remembers anything of Rogers, save perhaps that blank-verse description of the 'glorious city in the sea' which has been preserved by guide-books for the benefit of the English tourist in Venice. Yet in the early decades of the century the author of *Italy* and the *Pleasures of Memory* was accounted one of the greater poets. Macaulay in 1831 was puzzled to understand how 'such men as Lord Granville, Lord Holland, Hobhouse, Lord Byron, and others of high rank in intellect' could place him 'above Southey, Moore, and even Scott himself.' Byron, to be sure, had not gone quite all that length, although in a pyramidal diagram of contemporary poetical reputations he had placed Rogers next to Scott, and far above Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. He had also shown his admiration in a more practical way by allowing his *Lara* to be published in the same volume with Rogers's *Jacqueline*—a joint venture alluded to in his own correspondence as 'Larry and Jacky,' and tentatively described at the time by an ingenious critic in a stage-coach as 'summat like Sternhold and Hopkins, mayhap.' Nay, when Wordsworth

died in 1850, Rogers was officially recognised as the chief surviving poet, for it was only after he had refused it that the laureateship was given to Tennyson. Had he accepted it, he would have added to the list of laurelled bards a name hardly more faded than that of the last but one of his predecessors. In his own lifetime Southey was universally recognised, if not as the chief poet, yet as the foremost man of letters of his day; and the tradition of his learning, versatility, and his industry and enthusiasm in authorship, still secures and will probably always secure for him an honoured place in the history of English literature. It is, however, a tradition very feebly supported by actual acquaintance with his work. *The Life of Nelson*, it is true, is one of our popular classics, and we all know Old Kaspar, Bishop Hatto, and the water that so noisily comes down at Lodore. But who now disturbs the majestic repose of *Thalaba*, or *Kehama*, or *Madoc*; who reads the *Tale of Paraguay*, or *Roderick the Last of the Goths*? The laureate odes, of course—the *Carmina Aulica*, in honour of the allied conquerors of ‘Boney,’ and the *Carmen Nuptiale* that hailed the wedding of poor Princess Charlotte—are as echoless as the Tyrtæan stanzas penned by the excellent Mr Pye a hundred years ago for recitation to the militia regiments on Barham Down. ‘Forgot his epic, nay, Pindaric art,’ is an epitaph to the full as applicable to Southey as to Cowley.

When such is the fate of popular poets, it is no wonder that the world forgets scholars and critics like Bishop Warburton and Dr Samuel Parr. The editor of Pope and Shakespeare, the author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, the most active and dreaded controversialist of his time, Warburton has left only a faint tradition of polemic arrogance and ferocity. Dr Parr, whose once famous preface to Bellendinus gained him the renown of first Latinist of his age, was regarded by Fox and his friends as a Whig Dr Johnson, and, to say the truth, did not rate himself any lower than their flattering estimate. ‘The age of great scholars,’ he said, ‘is past; I am the only one now remaining of that race of men who could sit down with pleasure to devour a folio.’ Alas! how many in these degenerate days have devoured even a single one of the eight ponderous octavos which contain the doctor’s own works? Perhaps a Whig Boswell might have preserved his memory by reporting his conversations in more friendly fashion than De Quincey has done; but, as it is, Dr Parr owes his posthumous fame almost entirely to Sydney Smith’s celebrated description of his wig which ‘scorned even episcopal limits behind,’ and swelled out ‘into boundless convexity of frizz, the *mega thauma* of barbers, and the terror of the literary world.’

In a letter published a few months ago in a volume of her remains, Lady Louisa Stuart, the

friend of Sir Walter Scott, has told how, after a long interval, she ventured to renew acquaintance with the novels of Henry Mackenzie. In her youthful days everybody had cried over the *Man of Feeling*; but when, thirty years later, she tried to melt her young friends with the woes of Harley, ‘Oh, they actually laughed.’ Yet little more than a hundred years ago Henry Mackenzie was the literary oracle of Edinburgh, the Scottish Addison, the Scottish Sterne. And earlier still John Home had been the Scottish Shakespeare; and Wilkie, on the strength of his awful *Epigoniad*, the Scottish Homer; while Dr Hugh Blair was a Scottish Aristotle (in criticism), and Lord Kames a kind of Scottish Bacon. Surely here is matter for great searchings of heart in the kail-yard.

If we have left the novelists to the last it is certainly not because they are less liable than others to feel the decay of popularity and the mutations of literary fashion. On the contrary, inasmuch as fiction now is the most popular kind of literature, the struggle for existence in it is infinitely the hardest, and in its annals one may find perhaps the greatest number of once flourishing reputations that have hopelessly withered. Not to go farther back than a hundred years ago, there was Mrs Radcliffe, whose mysterious romances used to keep our great-grandmothers palpitating with awful curiosity and shuddering with pleasing terror. It may be questioned, indeed, whether any of the women-novelists of England has been more popular with her contemporaries than the authoress of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, or whether any heroines have ever been followed through three volumes with such trembling and breathless excitement as the Adelines and Emilys who suffer persecution from wicked monks and counts in the gloomy halls of Italian convents and castles. Yet Mrs Radcliffe, whose novels Crabb Robinson preferred to those of Scott, and whom Scott himself used to cite as a mistress in her art, has long ago gone to the limbo of literary forgetfulness to keep ghostly company with Honoré D’Urfé and Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and (if Georgian propriety forbid not) with bonnie Mrs Behn.

With her has gone the pleasant, frothy, good-natured ‘Monk’ Lewis, whose sensational and scandalous romance was among the most popular books of the eighteenth century’s last decade, and who himself was such a literary ‘swell,’ as Thackeray used to say, that an invitation to dine with him gave young Walter Scott one of the proudest moments of his life. William Godwin is another of the neglected novelists of those days; for although his *Caleb Williams* is still sometimes talked about, its title, we suspect, is much more generally familiar than its contents. That such is the case with Mrs Shelley’s novel is proved by the significant fact that the name Frankenstein is constantly misapplied in allusions

in the press. It is not, as most persons seem to imagine, the name of the monster in the story, but of the hero who made him. The great Berners Street hoax—one of the events of the year of Corunna and the O. P. Riots—is a work of Theodore Hook's far better remembered than *Jack Brag* or *Gilbert Gurney*, and it is long since the world ceased to listen for the tramp of those two romantic horsemen—the dark one and the fair—who ride through the opening pages of so many a novel by George Payne Rainsford James. Nay, there seem to be signs that a far more brilliant, more popular, and more recent novelist than any

of these is doomed to furnish an example of the transitoriness of literary fame, for already one hears ominously little of *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and *Rienzi*, and *The Caxtons*, and *My Novel*. Lord Lytton assuredly was not kept waiting for his banquet of popularity; the room was lighted betimes, the wines were bright and heady, and there was a thronging crowd of eager and flattering guests. If in the future he is numbered among the famishing and deserted ones it will be another proof that such neglect is not always to be taken for absolute or merited condemnation.

## OF ROYAL BLOOD.

### A STORY OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

#### CHAPTER XL.—WILES AND WISDOM.



**I**SAT next morning on one of the chairs just inside the entrance to the Bois, awaiting the dark-eyed woman who held me beneath her invincible charm. In the bright sunshine the birds sang joyously, the air was still fresh with that sweet odour of the woods, and as yet none of the morning riders had arrived. From where I sat I could see far down the long leafy avenue leading to the city, and as yet there was no sign of the first electric tram which would bear her to me. I had ridden up on my cycle, which now stood at the roadside; and as I sat there I reflected deeply upon the strange events of the previous night. A few brief hours ago and I had been unaware of my dainty little friend's name and station, while now I was there awaiting her, having received her permission to act as her escort. I recollected how truly regal was her figure, with that magnificent tiara flashing in the light; how every woman and man in the room had looked admiringly upon her, and commented in undertones upon her great beauty as she passed; and I remembered, too, how utterly unassuming she had been towards me, treating me, a struggling diplomatist, exactly as if her equal. She had even confided in me. Indeed, was I not in possession of one of her secrets? She had allowed me to become her friend.

The one fact, however, which had puzzled me, and caused me much speculation as I lay in bed during the couple of hours or so I had spent at home, was the reason of her strange fear on the approach of that tall man who had passed us in the lounge so noiselessly. Times without number I strove to form within myself some idea of his personal appearance, yet without avail. It had been so dark in there, where only those Moorish oil-lights in their long globes illuminated the place dimly, that his face had been merely

a dark blotch in the silhouette as he went by. His white shirt-front had been conspicuous—nothing else. Again, while all were in uniform or in court-dress, this man was dressed quite plainly, with only a single decoration—a cross suspended by a ribbon beneath his cravat. It was a dark ribbon, I had noticed; but what the order was I could form no idea.

From her sudden fear it was evident that this stranger's appearance had been utterly unexpected. She had been unnerved in an instant; and, as he passed, she had sat with her hand on mine involuntarily, as though seeking my protection from some evil which she dreaded. Yet he had passed us by. Whether he had recognised her I know not. If he did, he made no sign, but passed on in the same serious, pensive attitude as one who was trying to form some plan or scheme some terrible revenge. Curious it was, too, that I had not noticed him in the ball-room, for a man attired so plainly must have been conspicuous. Nevertheless, when he had gone she seemed to breathe more freely, and we rose at her instigation and followed him to where the dance was still in progress. But he vanished instantly, as though he had become in a moment invisible; a fact which in itself seemed to increase rather than diminish her apprehensions.

I saw in the full glare of electricity how pale and agitated was her beautiful face. That look of supreme contentment had given place to a hard, haggard expression, as though she were haunted by some secret terror; and then, after one turn around the room, her eyes ever searching for this man who had appeared and disappeared so suddenly, she had bidden me farewell and left.

This ending to our pleasant hour of confidences and light gossip was indeed a curiously abrupt one. Her fear seemed to arise more from the



fact that I was with her as companion than anything else; and as I drove to my rooms in the higher part of the town I became immersed in a veritable ocean of doubts and fears.

We were but friends of an hour, therefore I had no right to question her about this man. Nevertheless, I had spontaneously loved her at first sight in the Bois with a strength of passion of which I had never believed myself capable; and now, as she was anxious and in fear, I felt it my duty to stand as her champion. At the instant when she had given me her hand and wished me 'good-night' I had asked whether our appointment for later that morning had not better be postponed till next day; but she only opened those great brilliant eyes of hers wider, and asked:

'Why?'

'Because it is already three,' I answered. 'You will get no rest.'

'I want none,' she answered with just a touch of sadness. 'I shall not sleep to-night. Good-bye till six.'

Then, smiling, and with a swish of her silken skirts, she had drawn herself up and passed on across the great hall of marble and gold, where the servants in the royal livery bowed before her.

Thus I had kept the appointment, and after waiting a quarter of an hour or so, the first tram came swiftly up the long avenue, and from it there alighted the neat figure in white cotton blouse and black skirt, with the plain straw-hat—the lithe, slim figure I knew so well.

I rose, walking quickly towards her with hand outstretched gladly. She looked so bright and fresh as she greeted me that none would believe she had been up the greater part of the night. All trace, too, of that strange, mysterious dread had disappeared. Her dark hair, dressed so elaborately on the previous night, was now coiled simply, and both skirt and boots I noticed were a trifle shabby; indeed, they were such as would have been discarded by the majority of young ladies who disport themselves awheel later in the morning because it is considered *chic* so to do. Still, even in those well-worn clothes, she possessed a charm and grace which held her exalted and distinguished above other women. In her gait alone, walking erect, upright, easy, there was a stamp of royal hauteur; while in her eyes—those soft, dark eyes which seemed to smile so bewitchingly and sweetly upon me—there was often a swift resentful glance which told me how proud and cold she could be to those who were not her intimates.

'The keeper in the lodge over there has my cycle,' she explained in breathless eagerness when she had told me how, being late, she had dressed hurriedly and left the Palace by the servants' entrance just in time to scramble into the tram. Then we went together to the old man, who,

wishing us good-morning, wheeled out her machine, which had been repaired since her accident; and, after some slight adjustment to the saddle, we both mounted and spun away along that well-kept road which all in Brussels know is a perfect paradise for the cyclist.

That she was a practised rider I at once recognised by the manner in which she mounted; and very soon, her hat becoming loose, she raised both hands to her head to readjust it, steering only by the balance of her body.

'Come! come!' I laughed. 'Don't ride recklessly again. Recollect the last time, and its result.'

'Oh, I'm going to be very careful in future, I assure you,' she answered, turning to me with a merry laugh. 'I promise you that I won't run any unnecessary risks. Besides, my hand is not altogether well yet.'

Her assertion, however, was not borne out by her riding, for she paced along at a rate extremely swift for a woman, shooting down the short inclines even quicker than I did; but there were no other cyclists or carriages there at that hour, and swift riding in the bright morning hour was very exhilarating. That she enjoyed it was shown by her face, gleeful and flushed with exertion; while the wind had slightly disarranged her hair, and a wisp of it strayed across her curved cheek, pure and rounded as a child's. Her machine was a light one of the best English make, with every improvement, carrying one of those large French horns instead of a bell, an instrument which, blown by squeezing an india-rubber ball, emitted a loud, terrible trumpeting which could be heard a mile away. The manner in which she rode was proof of the keen delight she took in cycling. Perhaps it was because she participated in the popular recreation surreptitiously that gave this increased zest to her pleasure. At any rate, our first spin was a most enjoyable one, a ride beneath those wide-spreading trees, fresh in their young green and bright in the morning sunshine, that I shall recollect for ever among my most cherished memories of days that have gone.

At length we slowed down near the picturesque lake, with its tiny island and chalet in the distance; and then, as we rode easily side by side, she commenced to chat about the people on cycles and on horseback who were now beginning to pass and repass us, for the early morning ride had already commenced. One rider who went by was a captain of cavalry, in his smart olive-green and cherry-colour uniform; and as he passed he saluted her.

'Does he recognise you?' I inquired quickly.

'Oh dear, no,' she laughed. 'He's only one of my morning friends. Perhaps he thinks I bear a striking resemblance to myself; but none would dream that I come cycling here alone at this hour. Therefore I am quite safe.'

'And your Highness has no fear of being recognised?'

'None,' she responded. 'The very people who pass me unheeding now, salute me when at four o'clock I drive here in the carriage with my mother. One's dress makes all the difference. Fine feathers make fine birds;' and she laughed merrily as she thought how ingeniously she preserved her morning incognito.

In that bright fresh air and brilliant sunshine, spinning along the wide avenues, and now and then taking narrow sideways where the trees met overhead, our ride was most delightful. Her happy laughter rang out always when I expressed fear at whatever seemed to be a reckless action. Indeed, it seemed as though she took an intense delight in causing me alarm. Yet was she not in my charge, and did I not love her with all the strength of my being? I longed to tell her so; I longed to get her to sit for a moment upon one of those inviting seats in the quiet beneath the trees, and there pour out to her the secret of my heart. But I could never do that—never. I was her friend; not her lover. She was the Princess Mélanie of Hapsburg, who some day might become a queen. And what was I? No, for the thousandth time I strove to stifle this burning affection, which, fatal to my happiness, had arisen so suddenly within me. I told myself that I had foolishly gone back upon the vow I had made years ago. I was casting to the winds all the tenets of my religion as a diplomatist; I was acting just as the fledgling attaché would act, and had fallen a victim to a woman's gaze. It was all airy, romantic, impossible. If I told her of my love she would merely laugh in my face. No; she, a princess, could never be mine—never. Yet had I not been told that she had somewhere a lover, a man unknown, unacknowledged, unrepresentable, to whom she clung in secret. No doubt she met him clandestinely, and he—some cold, cunning scoundrel—perhaps profited in a pecuniary sense from their acquaintance.

In wonder I again looked at her. If such were really the case it did not seem feasible that she should ride with me. Why did he not ride at her side? Then still another thought occurred to me. Her lover might be married, and might by cycling with her compromise himself! Such suggestion seemed so like the truth that I felt inclined to believe it. Again, could that mysterious figure which had passed us by in silence and in shadow have been the man himself? Was it because he had discovered me there with her that she had betrayed the intense fear and anxiety which had so puzzled me? I strove yet again to form some theory, but all in vain. She had come into my life, and held me spellbound by her beauty and charm of manner. There was a fascination in those eyes absolutely irresistible, a frankness in her conversation which held me

to her as to an intimate friend. In brief, I had become entranced, and was hers unwittingly, body and soul.

At last, at a shady, restful point, where the foliage grew thickly and the fresh smell of the woods was refreshing, we dismounted, placed our machines against a tree-trunk, and sat down. There was a summer warmth in the air; the little forest birds hopped from bough to bough, chirping and pluming themselves, and the low rustle of the leaves was as the sighing of the sea.

I asked her whether she were not fatigued; but she answered in the negative, laughing lightly.

'But you must really be tired,' she said. 'As a rule you men don't rise so early. Was it because you wished to appear amiable towards me?'

'I—well, I like cycling,' I stammered, rather confounded by the directness of her question.

'But you haven't cycled here before—have you?' she asked. 'I remember one morning you were riding with your friend Colonel Giffard. Your mount was a dark bay.'

'Yes,' I answered, surprised that she should have noticed me. I had not seen her. 'Then you knew me by sight before your accident—eh?'

'I had noticed you once or twice,' she responded. 'I always think that you diplomatic people must have an awfully jolly time. You are entirely free; you have always a good set of friends, plenty of gaiety, and nothing to do except to deceive one another artistically.'

'Well, your description of diplomatic life is certainly flavoured with sarcasm,' I said, laughing heartily. 'You are, however, quite correct when you say that we tell untruths artistically. The more artful the deceiver the more successful the diplomatist.'

'Of course,' she agreed. 'If an ambassador told the truth he'd have to present his letters of recall within a week. From my own observation I've come to the conclusion that a diplomatist must possess absolutely no conscience, and be unscrupulous alike towards both friends and enemies.'

'No, no,' I protested, 'we are really not all like that. True, compelled as we are to protect the interests of the country we represent, we endeavour always to do so by fair means; but when we have in active opposition to us enemies who will not hesitate at the meanest action in order to attain their own ends, we are then compelled to act smartly, even if it savours of insincerity, for the purpose of outwitting them.'

'The crowd of ambassadors at the Court of Berlin always amuse me,' she said. 'Each one is trying to get the better of his friend, and the Emperor treats the whole assembly as so many toys. He once told me that his Court would be very dull if it were not for their eternal scrambling over one another.'

'He was quite right,' I laughed. 'Nevertheless,

I suppose we are among the necessary evils in the world. If there was no diplomacy we should have war to-morrow.'

'Certainly,' she answered, growing in an instant serious. 'I was, of course, only chaffing. Sometimes the bickering in diplomatic circles presents a very undignified spectacle to a monarch, although in these unsettled days, when you English have to cope with France and Russia combined, together with considerable illwill in Berlin, it behoves you to have your wits ever ready. I often think we are within measurable distance of war.'

'Why?' I inquired quickly.

She sat pensive, her tiny feet in shabby shoes stretched forth beneath the rather short skirt. She had apparently allowed the remark to slip inadvertently from her lips, and was hesitating, her face now grave, now sensitive, now touched with that mysterious exaltation that glows through the histories of the saints, that shines from dusty tapestries, that hides in the dim faces carved on shrines.

'I hear ominous predictions,' she answered in a low tone, and I thought I detected that she shuddered. 'If there is war, it will be with England. The Powers will unite to crush her.'

I turned my eyes upon hers seriously. Was it not strange that she should tell me this; that she should thus refer to the terrible dread which was at that moment consuming us at the legation; that she should utter the prophecy which I knew, alas! to be too true.

She gazed at me steadily, her dark, luminous eyes unwavering. Could it be that she knew of the inexplicable theft of the document from the despatch-box, and that she, like myself, was dreading its dire result?

The theft was, of course, known to the King; but he had vowed solemnly to Sir John Drummond to say no word of it, even to his intimates. None knew of it outside the legation; yet throughout her whole conversation there was a note of warning. Had she, a princess, received secret information that war with England was imminent, and, as my friend, found a means of warning me?

'Do you really think that England is so isolated as is generally believed?' I inquired.

'Yes,' she answered with a strange, hard look. 'All your clever diplomacy has been frustrated by the machinations of your ingenious enemies, and at this moment England is in gravest peril.'

## SOME SUPERSTITIONS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MAYA INDIANS.

By Dr THOMAS GANN, J.P., Author of *Mounds of Northern Honduras, Some Central American Indians, &c.*



HOUGH the Aztecs and Toltecs, at the time of the conquest of Mexico, were by far the most highly civilised aboriginal nations of the New World, it is a remarkable fact that at the present day—not

quite four centuries from the landing of the first European on the American continent—they appear to be entirely without traditions of their former greatness, complicated religion, and pre-eminence over surrounding nations, both in the arts of peace and war. Many of the more barbarous tribes of North, Central, and South America have retained, without any material change, some of their religious and civil customs, together with their arms, clothing, and utensils; but the Maya Toltec and Aztec, the two great races of the New World, have almost completely lost their individuality, and become merged in the scum of the descendants of their conquerors. Here and there, however, in that little known strip of territory lying between Mexico on the north, Guatemala on the south, and Yucatan on the east, there are still to be found small Indian settlements buried in the bush, to whom rum, Spanish, and iron are unknown; and it is amongst these Indians that one can still glean

some faint idea of what life under the rule of the second Montezuma was like.

My attention was first called to the existence of these settlements during the time I was Resident Magistrate at the Cayo, the most advanced station in British Honduras, by seeing cocoa-nut husks, plantain skins, and *hicotee* shells floating down the Mopan River, indicating that the valley of the river, higher up, was inhabited, which till then it was not known to be.

These Indians have acquired extraordinary dexterity with the bow and arrow, which, with the spear, is their only weapon; though the boys, before they are strong enough to draw the bow, often use a sling made from a strip of raw hide, with which they kill squirrels and small birds. The bows are about five feet long, made of a thin, tough strip of *cuhoon*-palm, well seasoned. The arrows are of two kinds: those used for shooting fish in the water, and those for use in the bush. The former, made of a thin slip of sapodilla, is very heavy in proportion to its length, is tipped with a tiny splinter of obsidian or volcanic glass, and barbed nearly one-third up the shaft; while to the base is attached a thin cord of henequen. This arrow is a most deadly weapon for either fish or fresh-water turtle; but

is effective only to a depth of from four to six inches. The arrow for use in the bush is much longer; its shaft is very light, generally made of reed or the spike which bears the flower of the sugar-cane, to which is spliced five or six inches of sapodilla, tipped with flint. The arrows are usually carried in a tiger-skin quiver, and can be used with marvellous rapidity, as the following incident will show: A chief of the Lacondones of my acquaintance, named Canek, had been on bad terms with his father-in-law for some time. One morning, whilst hunting in the bush, he espied the old man in an *anana*-tree, gathering the apples. He at once fired an arrow at the man, striking him through the chest; and, whilst the body was falling, placed another arrow in the neck. Fortunately for himself, he managed to reach the nearest Spanish settlement before any of the murdered man's relatives could overtake him.

Before the introduction of Christianity, the god Tlaloc, the God of the Air, of Spring, and of Fertility, was one of the principal deities worshipped by the Toltecs, who in the spring, when the bush had been cut preparatory to sowing the maize crop, made offerings to him in their *milpas* (corn-patches) of cooked meat, maize, and *atole*. Amongst the remoter villages this ancient rite is still practised. The whole of the villagers meet together on an appointed night, in the month of April, when a great lump of boiled corn-pulp, coloured with yellow clay, is divided into small pieces, which are then buried all over the *milpa*, together with small *jicaras* of cooked meat; and everyone present partakes of the dainties. A tiny *jicara* of sweet, brown viscid drink, made from the bark of a tree, is also passed round; this only holds a few spoonfuls of liquor, which is so strong that any one drinking the whole would at once become intoxicated. After the feast, dancing begins, which is usually kept up all that night and until the evening of the following day.

In the more civilised villages, especially if there be a *padre* in the vicinity, the Indians can only make these offerings secretly. They leave a *jicara* of cooked pork, fowl, tortillas, and bush-meat in their *milpas* and also on the graves of their departed friends, whose spirits they believe come and feast. Now, the coolies and negroes, who are for the most part without fear of God or man, come and eat up the food, both in the *milpas* and on the graves. Then the poor Indian, coming in the morning, rejoices to think his god has accepted the offering, or the spirit of his friend or relative (as the case may be) has enjoyed a good meal.

The great bugbear of Indian children is Chilam Bälääm, or the God of the Bush, supposed to be a yellow-bearded man, with blue eyes, who goes about in the bush picking up children; and the threat of sending for Chilam Bälääm to take

him away is sufficient to keep the naughtiest little Maya quiet. Nor are the men altogether free from fear of this god; for when they cut down a piece of bush they always make offerings to him for interfering with his property.

The ancient Aztecs and Toltecs had well-defined orders of nobility and knighthood, together with the grades in military rank, which were marked by differences in costume and ornaments, especially in the form of the ear and nose ornaments; and the assumption by an individual of a dress betokening a rank higher than that to which he was entitled was severely punished, in some cases even with death. Traces of this custom are still to be found amongst the Santa Cruz Indians. There, a youth, when he reaches the age of fourteen, becomes a soldier, and has to serve the tribe in that capacity for two or three months every year for the rest of his life. In this tribe the common soldiers wear no earrings; and though the uniform of a home-woven cotton shirt and pants is common to all, from the commander-in-chief to the last-joined recruit, all the grades are distinguished by the form, size, and number of earrings worn, from the enormous disc of gold, in both ears, by the higher officers, which drag the lobes half-way down to the shoulders, to the tiny copper earring of the petty officer, in one ear only.

A curious custom, the origin of which I have never been able to determine, is for the midwife, usually a very old woman, to suck vigorously for several minutes at the mouth and nose of the child immediately after birth. In one case, where the child was very weak, I saw this treatment prove fatal. For nine days after childbirth the mother is rigidly confined within her hut; every crevice is carefully blocked up with mud and rags, and no male is admitted. During this period the old women of the village hold frequent solemn meetings within the hut; but what goes on I have never been able to ascertain.

All Indians are very chary of employing outside medical assistance either for themselves or for their families; and on no account will they suffer themselves to be mutilated; preferring death to the loss of any limb or organ. The reason for this is that not only is a mutilated or deformed person looked upon by the rest with dislike and contempt, but they believe that a limb or organ lost in this life will be permanently wanting in the next. Certain of the so-called bush medicines used by the Indians are really useful; especially the astringent juice of a certain creeper called the water *ti-ti*, which they use with excellent effect in the treatment of chronic sores and ulcers; also a decoction made from a grass found in the bush, which is most useful as a diaphoretic and febrifuge in malaria; and the scrapings of a small brown bean, made into a poultice and applied to the wound, is supposed to be a specific for all poisonous bites, from that of a coral snake to



that of a mosquito. I have never had an opportunity of seeing the latter remedy tried for snake bites; but it at once relieved the pain and allayed the inflammation consequent on the sting of a large scorpion, which I had received on my hand whilst sorting some papers. Most of their remedies are, however, utterly barbaric; as the following instance will show: I had been excavating in one of the burial-mounds or *cerros* which abound all over Honduras, and had exposed a stucco-covered wall of a building on which was painted a representation of the sacrifice of two

human beings to Huitzilopochli, the God of War. Not having any tracing-paper at hand, I erected a roof of palm-leaves over the painting, intending to come back and trace it at my leisure. What was my horror, when I returned, to find the whole of the stucco torn from the wall. I learnt afterwards that it had been carefully removed by the Indians, and drunk by them, mixed with hot water, as a remedy for all kinds of diseases. On going the round of the huts I found small pieces of the stucco carefully hidden in several of them.

## QUENTIN HARCOURT, Q.C.: HIS LOVE STORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.



HE went to Dolly's birthday dinner on the following Saturday. But it had been necessary to strain a point in order to keep his promise; he had transferred to a clever junior the conduct of a somewhat important case which had been inconveniently timed to come on after luncheon on that day. He had brought with him a pair of gold bangles and as fine an edition as he could get (none fine enough has yet been issued) of Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*.

Dolly had recovered from her toothache, and was radiant. 'Oh,' she exclaimed, nestling against him, 'how nice you are, Uncle Quentin; you always give me what I want!'

She had slipped the bangles on her dimpled wrists, and then had opened the book, eager to discover what it was. The inspection was eminently satisfactory, for she clapped her hands with a little cry of delight.

'How funny!' she cried; 'how funny! It is just the one book I wanted! Did Hester tell you to get it? She said I should find it under my pillow this morning; but I didn't, and was so disappointed! But it wasn't her fault; the house-keeper would not let her go out last night—horrid, cross thing!' Then, very seriously, she added: 'But I'm very glad now, for poor Hester hasn't got to spend her money, and I know she hasn't much to spare.'

Quentin felt unreasonably annoyed; but at the moment luncheon was announced, and the talk diverted into another channel.

As he had hoped and expected, Hester was in attendance at table, though the fact of being waited upon by her gave him a certain uneasiness. She was as faultless in attire as on the previous evening, and she sustained the searching test of daylight without any disparagement of his first estimate.

Childlike, Dolly was running towards her to

exhibit her presents, until sharply checked by her mother, though Quentin perceived that Lady Northwick's reprimand would scarcely have sufficed for the spoilt darling had not a significant gesture of restraint from Hester confirmed it.

Again Quentin was aware of a movement of irritation against his sister, which he allowed to be unreasonable; and again he took himself to task for what seemed—in broad daylight and under present influences—an aberration of mind on his part, though it had worn another aspect in the starlighted shadows of Hyde Park.

He went away early, as he had important work to do; but before he had left the house an incident occurred which offered food for rumination.

Just at the moment that the servant had opened the hall door for his exit a young man ran up the steps and asked, with some hesitation, if Miss Sartoris resided there, and if he might be allowed to see her? He offered his card at the same time, on which a few words were pencilled.

The man, who recognised neither the visitor nor his name, explained that he must be under some mistake, as no lady of that name was known to him.

'But surely,' was the eager rejoinder, 'I am not wrong in supposing this to be Lady Northwick's house?'

At this point Quentin intervened; under any circumstances it behoved him to safeguard his sister's interests; and although the stranger had every appearance of being a gentleman, with the air of a soldier to boot, he still might only be a pleasing variety of the swindling brotherhood.

'I am Lady Northwick's brother,' he said pleasantly; 'can I do anything for you? No lady of the name you mention lives here.'

The young man flushed hotly.

'I fear I am making a mistake. She is probably known by some other name. I ought to have explained she is not a guest in the house, but one of the upper servants.'

The footman grinned. 'If that was the way of it,' he said, 'you have made a *de-cided* mistake. You have come to the wrong door, and asked the wrong person. The 'ousekeeper sees all visitors for the servants' 'all, and your way is round the corner to the side-entrance.' His look and manner were insolent enough; but it was an insolence held in check by Quentin's presence, not to mention by the bearing of the stranger.

'Ah,' he said, with an amused smile, 'I see that I could hardly have blundered worse! I will try the other door.' He raised his hat to Quentin and disappeared in the direction pointed out.

Quentin also pursued his way, reflecting. He thought he saw the situation at a glance: Miss Sartoris was Hester, a gentlewoman pure and simple, and masquerading as a serving-maid out of caprice or some twist of circumstance. Well, he had known she was a lady from his first glance. As for this young man, the question was a little more difficult. No doubt he was her lover—the Perseus arrived to release the Ariadne;—but whether he were a favoured lover was not so obvious. Quentin readily allowed that he had a good many points to recommend him. That he was a soldier, carriage and air announced; his voice was singularly pleasant, and he had evidently a lively sense of the humour of the situation. He had borne himself well in an awkward position, and was man enough not to look ashamed when five men out of six would probably have done so. But for all that, was there enough of him to meet the (supposed) requirements of Dolly's *raconteuse*?

Meantime, dear reader, will you come with me into the modest sanctuary of the housekeeper's parlour and solve the question for yourself?

It was contrary to the rules of the house to allow the women-servants to receive masculine friends; and that an exception was made in this case was solely due to the fact that Mrs Drummond was, at all points, in the confidence of the absent butler. The time of day, too, was propitious: luncheon was over, and some hours might elapse before Hester was wanted on duty again. She went into the room not knowing whom she was to meet, for the housekeeper had only told her that a friend had called to see her.

'I shall be busy in the store-room for half-an-hour or more, Miss Ellice,' she had said kindly; 'so that you will be able to have my room to yourself.'

Hester entered, and the next moment the two were together, the simultaneous swiftness of movement almost annihilating time and space. I do not mean 'they rushed into each other's arms,' as the dear old novelists used to say; but hand met hand in closest grasp, and eyes encountered eyes brimful of the rapture of welcome.

'You!' she cried, 'you! But who could have told you; and when did you arrive? Oh, Jack!'

her voice dropped to pathos. As for the young fellow himself, he held both her hands clasped against his breast and looked at her as if the hunger of his soul could not be satisfied by gazing.

'Oh, my dear, my dear,' he answered, 'give me a moment to taste my joy, to see you, to hear you, to know you are still mine and have suffered for me. Hester, I could drop at your feet!'

She laughed softly, and leaned towards him, suffering him to touch her lips.

'Tell me,' she asked, 'all that I want to know—about yourself.'

'Two days ago,' he said, 'we landed at Southampton after a bad voyage. The sick and wounded amongst us were worn out, and we who were well were sick with home-sickness—none worse than I. Hester, I have neither scratch nor scar. I was full of envy of the glorious wounds some of our fellows have brought home. You would have thought better of me, dear'—

'No, Jack, I could not think better of you than I do. Who knows, as I know, that you have dared and done as well as the bravest; only, you see, my prayers have been your defence day and night. To see you as you are, safe and sound, leaves me nothing to desire. I can scarcely trust the evidence of my senses.'

'Nor I!' touching her cap with the tips of his fingers and putting the hem of her apron to his lips.

He spoke lightly, to hide emotion that almost unmanned him—that is, as convention reckons manhood.

'It cuts me to the quick,' he said, 'that you should suffer for my sake; this kind of thing must hurt you. To pay you back goes beyond my poor power.'

She smiled and was silent, not being one of the women who protest and affirm; but as she met the yearning of his glance she put her head on his shoulder, and, looking with her steadfast eyes into his, asked softly:

'I wonder, Jack, if you have longed for me as I have longed for you?'

Then for answer he took her in his arms and kissed her with the passion that had grown stronger with every hour of a two years' absence, but was still held in restraint by the reverence he bore her.

'My queen! my life!' he murmured, looking at her with adoring eyes. But we will pass over those sacred moments of effusion, until we find the lovers able to ask and answer questions, and so inform themselves of the precise position of each.

'From Waterloo,' he explained, 'I took a cab and went straight to your uncle's house. I doubted if I should be admitted; but I was, and he saw me at once, for no other purpose than to madden me with the news he gave me of your dear self, and to insult me grossly. He

dared to tell me he had shut his doors against you because of your ingratitude and obstinacy—I knew because of your divine faithfulness to me. He professed at first not to know where you were gone; but under pressure—and you may guess I did not pick and choose my words, Hester—allowed that you had probably taken shelter with your old nurse. One of the servants gave me her address, and I learned from her where to find you. Dearest, was there no other alternative?’

‘Are you ashamed of me, Jack?’

‘Ten thousand times, no! Had I met you begging alms in the highway, Hester, from that moment mendicancy would have seemed honourable! Only, dear, it is the personal pain and loss you must feel, the strangeness and unnaturalness of the thing that vexes me. I am come home, thank God, to end it.’

She shook her head. ‘Not yet. We shall not be rash because the situation is unusual. I am not unhappy, and I prefer this way of earning a living to teaching little children, though I love them dearly, or to lending my voice on hire. I thank my late dear aunt heartily for bringing me up not only to know how things ought to be done, but to do them.’

‘For all that,’ he said, ‘I cannot bear it. I shall throw up my commission at once and then you will not refuse to come to me.’

‘To comfort you for the sacrifice of all you hold dearest—your career, your honour! No, Jack, I will not do that. I am yours for all time; and we can wait, because we trust each other, for another two years. Then my uncle’s authority ceases, and I am free to do as I choose. All is not well lost for love. I will not be a stumbling-stone to your advancement.’

Captain Fleming knitted his brows impatiently.

‘My advancement! It is of no account in comparison with you. I am not sure that I can wait. Some tasks are too hard for us; and then the chances, Hester! Our regiment is marked for active service again. Thank God! I would say, if it were not for you; and if I fall, the thought of all I left and lost would make death bitter. Be my wife now, and let us risk the future.’

‘My hope, my conviction, is that you will not fall; and, after all, are there no chances and risks in civil life? Be persuaded to be reasonable and worldly wise as I am. May I dare to remind you that for me to marry without my uncle’s consent within these stipulated two years is to lose my little fortune to its uttermost farthing? I love you with all my heart, Jack; but I own it would cost me a pang to come to you in beggar-maid fashion. No, we will wait while you gain fresh glory for me to share; and of this I am certain, that the love and patience that have stood the test so well won’t fail us, now that both are grown so strong.’

‘Oh, my dear,’ he cried ruefully, ‘you make things too hard for me! Love may have been strengthened; but as for patience, I am at the end of my tether. To see you, to hear you, and to leave you is more than flesh and blood can stand. Hester, you are superb! a thousand times more beautiful, sweeter, and nobler than of old’—

He approached her with kindling eyes; but she drew back smiling, with finger on her lip.

‘I hear Mrs Drummond’s footsteps, Jack—the dear woman means me to hear them! Stop, I will introduce you to her, and explain, as I will explain to Lady Northwick later. One point at least I’ll yield. Your blessed coming shall end this masquerade.’

## GREEK MARBLE.



THE architectural glories of classic antiquity depended upon two special advantages that came to the aid of the artist’s genius and the skill of the constructor. These were superior climate and super-excellent material. Were it not for the perfection of their marbles, it is questionable if even the fine climate of the Mediterranean would have stimulated the architects of Greece and Rome to create almost imperishable constructions, to be objects of admiration and attempted imitation in our own day; and it remains a curious fact that we have still to turn to the quarries of classic times for our statuary marble, while only Greece can yet supply the finest marbles for constructive purposes. These various marbles have recently taken a new lease of life as objects

of public favour; and a short notice of their character and the manner of their resuscitation may interest the general reader, seeing they are now being developed on a modern scale by an English company.

During the fifteen hundred years that followed the destruction of Greek independence art-culture virtually disappeared from the land. It requires security as well as leisure to permit the vigorous growth of any art except that of war; and strange to say, that while *Los Arabes* of Spain were patrons alike of art and learning, and saved much of the science and many of the literary masterpieces of classic times from destruction, the ‘unspeakable Turk’ seems to have had too much of the Tartar in his composition, or been too busy with the scimitar, to have encouraged any arts but those that pandered to

gradually increasing luxury and self-indulgence amongst the governing class. In any case, we have not in Turkey from ancient days such masterpieces of architectural work of its class as the Alhambra, nor can we find there the delicate marble traceries that abound amongst the Moorish houses of northern Africa.

The famous marble quarries of the Pentelikon, near Athens, remained consequently undisturbed and silent until this century, when after the crowning of the first King of Greece the erection of a royal palace again called attention to the national wealth in the finest of stone. The road to the foot of the Penteli hills was reopened, the bridges repaired, and a large quantity of the famous old marble employed in the construction of a new Athens.

It was wisely decided that the old Greek quarries should remain untouched, so that we have clear evidence of the mode of working these in classic times. According to a recent German authority: 'Although the layers are not horizontal, but are dipping inwards, the blocks have all been cut and removed by wedges horizontally to the vertical smoothly-chiselled walls. The quarries form therefore a series of gallery-like right-angle stone chambers, from which perfectly regular parallelepipedic stone blocks of every size, even to the largest, were taken, as the thickness of the layers had not to be considered in this manner of extraction.' As the modern system is, however, to prevent diagonal stratification, and also to avoid the more readily weathered seams of mica shale, the marble is preferably quarried from its natural layer. This Pentelikon marble forms a great part of the ranges, and, fortunately, the upper portion. The lower part up to five hundred and fifty feet is limestone in transition; but thence up to eleven hundred feet it is pure marble; the estimate being that there still remain two thousand million tons of pure white marble and six hundred million tons of white marble with blue veins. A railway has now been constructed to the foot of the range, to meet the inclined plane that carries the blocks down from the quarries, so this fine stone, from which the Parthenon at Athens was built two thousand four hundred years ago, can be delivered at a cheap rate throughout Europe. Seeing that the so-called Elgin Marbles, obtained by Lord Elgin from the Parthenon, were made from this marble, it may readily be credited when asserted by an authority that the Pentelikon marble is harder, has a finer grain, and is in every respect superior to the Carrara marble. Its purity and beauty must be seen to be appreciated.

But whilst this pure-white marble may be accepted as the king of building stones, as well as the most perfect for statuary, there are many other marbles much better suited for use in this country, where the main employment must continue to be in ornamental work inside. There

alone such a valuable and beautiful stone can be usefully employed in our treacherous climate, and within range of our reckless consumption of coal. The more or less characterless marbles that have been introduced from the Peninsula and elsewhere have not proved generally attractive, and for black marble only a limited outlet can be found. Even that has become still more limited under the recent wise impetus for brighter and gayer interiors in our sufficiently dull land. So that although Greece also supplies a fine black stone, she is more likely to be noted amongst us for the richer-toned stones that were also famous of old. The Peloponnesus not only supplies white, black, and yellow marbles, but the beautiful *Rosso-Antico*, as if streaked with blood and fire in a broad belt; the *Verdi-Antico* comes from one of the islands, with other beautiful mottled varieties, each with its own admirers and its own special suitability.

By-and-by our architects will no doubt acquire more skill in the handling of these fine stones, and learn to design our public halls where it will be unnecessary to have the electric light at midday in order to see the costly decorations! The 'dim religious light' on the marble floors of the East is only suitable for the land of the sun, not for the kaleidoscopic cloud-land under which we dwell, and where every ray of natural light should usually be encouraged to the utmost. Now that marble can be, and is, cut into veneers with almost the ease of hardwood, we should see this most perfect of stones in fine sheets taking the place of tile-work, and reflecting the light from many a now dingy lobby or more pretentious entrance-way. In place of carrying off the treasures of classic Greece in marble, let us carry off the crude material, and learn to handle it artistically to suit our own special northern and modern conditions. We see it mainly now where it is wholly out of place, reflecting the heat and light amongst evil-smelling fish, where a slate slab is every way superior.

Perfect architecture requires perfect materials, and these are both found in Greece. The importation of the materials, and a more scientific study of their application, will do much to raise the style of our own mongrel productions. Replicas of the Parthenon, simple as it seems, have been a failure owing to ignorance of the graduation of the pillars to meet the distance from the eye and the point of sight of the ordinary onlooker. The Greeks neither drew a lofty frieze on the flat, nor placed choice stones in a dimly lighted cellar. They have taught us how to use materials appropriately if we will only take the plain lessons of the classic times; and now that an English company has undertaken the exploitation of this famous classic industry, new materials will be in the hands of our architects for intelligent application.



## A SOP FOR A SAURIAN.

By Captain F. R. H. CHAPMAN.

**T**HAT cigar-case,' said Colonel Plugger, addressing the company in the smoking-room of the Rovers' Club, and handing round for inspection the receptacle from which he had just extracted an enormous Trichinopoly cheroot, 'commonplace as it looks, has a curious history. Perhaps you would like to hear it?'

The colonel's cigar-case was of crocodile skin, edged with silver; and its flaps were decorated each with a small circular silver plate, one engraved with the owner's crest, the other bearing the inscription 'Kaimanpore, 18—'

The spokesman, confident in his popularity as a raconteur, settled himself comfortably in his arm-chair, emitted from his lips a cloud of pungent smoke, and, without awaiting an invitation to commence, plunged forthwith into the following recital:

'Some five-and-twenty years ago, I, a young subaltern, was serving on detachment at Kerani, a lonely frontier post on the edge of the Shorwar desert. Detachment-duty on the frontier, involving as it did banishment for a year from the pleasures of society, was not popular with our fellows; and before I left headquarters many of my brother-officers commiserated me on the hardship of my fate in being sent into exile. Nevertheless, I spent at Kerani some of the happiest days of my life. The place was a sportsman's paradise.

'In the cold-weather season the surrounding country teemed with small game. The *jheels* (tanks) abounded with duck, teal, and snipe, and in the fields of young crops were swarms of quail. Flocks of geese, uttering their discordant cries, would pass high overhead in kite-shaped procession, though they seldom ventured within shot. Armies of *coolen* (demoiselle crane), their serried phalanxes glinting and flashing in the sunlight, could frequently be seen wheeling and soaring in the air, performing with military precision a series of graceful manoeuvres. Farther afield were to be found bustard, *oobara*, black partridge, and the beautiful imperial grouse. Were I to tell you of some of the splendid bags we made, your mouths would water with envy, and you would hardly believe me. But I am wandering from my subject. You must pardon an old sportsman, carried away by recollections of days and scenes never, alas! to return.

'Forty miles from Kerani was a large village named Kaimanpore, regarding which the following story was related to me by my *shikari*, Lall Mohammed, a native of those parts.

'In 1857, a Mohammedan saint, famed for his

piety and for his hatred of the infidels, visited Kaimanpore with the object of inciting his co-religionists to join in the great rebellion; but the villagers, in order to gain favour with the English, slew the emissary of sedition, and cast his body into a tank. No sooner had the body of the murdered man sunk below the surface than the waters of the tank miraculously dried up, leaving no vestige of the corpse. From that day the curse of Allah had been upon Kaimanpore. From the failure of the water-supply resulted a famine, in the course of which many families perished of hunger or thirst, and the survivors fled to another district. In the following monsoon—rainy season—the exiled villagers, hearing that the tank at Kaimanpore was once more filled with water, returned to their homes, and were surprised to find, under a *peepul*-tree, near the margin of the tank, a newly-built Mohammedan tomb. An aged *peer* (holy man) introduced himself to them as the guardian of the shrine, averring that he had been deputed by the Prophet to keep watch and ward over the remains of the blessed martyr, Moulah Bux, who had fallen a victim to their treachery. The *peer* informed them further that Allah, though graciously permitting them to reside in their former habitations, had decreed that they and their descendants should cherish and foster a crocodile indwelt with immortality, and destined to abide in the tank as an eternal memento of the sacrilegious crime committed by the inhabitants of Kaimanpore.

"Behold!" continued the *peer*, blowing a shrill blast on a horn, "the Lord of the Lagoon reveals himself."

'Ere the sound of the note had died away there was a violent undulation in the water, a dark, ponderous body churned its way heavily through the weeds, and the long head of an enormous saurian, with small vicious eyes and mighty jaws furnished with rows of serrated teeth, was protruded above the surface. The conscience-stricken villagers, appalled by the sight of this terrible apparition, fell flat on their faces on the ground, where they lay trembling with apprehension lest some of them should be sacrificed then and there to appease the wrath of the offended deity. They were reassured by the *peer's* informing them that the Lord of the Lagoon preferred the flesh of goats to that of human beings, and that, so long as they should keep him well supplied with his favourite food he would exact no further tribute.

'As there was excellent shooting to be had in the country about Kaimanpore, I resolved to spend my Christmas leave there, and my friend Spencer of the Sappers promised to accompany

me on the expedition. On Christmas Eve we rode out to Kaimanpore, and found our tents pitched in a delightful situation, under an old spreading mango-tree near the bank of the famous tank. After dinner we sat before a roaring log-fire, enjoying our cheroots and listening contentedly to the hum of insects in the air and the subdued quacking of the waterfowl from the neighbouring pool. Rising at dawn next morning, we had several hours' capital sport with the duck and teal, and returned to our encampment about midday.

'While seated at breakfast we received a visit from the *peer*, who, after the customary salutations had been exchanged, asked us when we intended to make our propitiatory offering to the Lord of the Lagoon, adding insinuatingly that he had a flock of goats, all of which were for sale at moderate prices, and any one of which would serve admirably for the purpose. "Confound the fellow's impudence," said Spencer; "he's trying to blackmail us. What the dickens does he mean by it?"

"His lordship is very hungry this morning," continued the *peer*, gravely ignoring the interruption. "'Twere better not to disappoint him. He is ready to anger, and likes not to be thwarted. Lo! he awaits his meal."

'Looking in the direction indicated by our visitor, we saw yawning up from the water a pair of huge jaws, opened wide in ravenous expectancy of the matutinal dole.

"Reminds one for all the world of our boyhood's friend, the hippopotamus at the Zoo—doesn't he?" said I. "Let's give him something in memory of old times."

"What a repulsive-looking brute!" returned Spencer with a shudder. "Fancy those teeth meeting in the calf of one's leg. If he'd spotted us while we were wading through the reeds this morning we shouldn't now be where we are."

"Here, your lordship," said I, picking up a large duck, and heaving it into the gaping cavern of a mouth, "is a trifle wherewith to stay your august appetite."

'As the duck disappeared into the monster's maw the mighty jaws clashed together with a metallic click and sprang open again immediately. I repeated the duck-heaving process several times, with the same result, till at last Spencer stopped me, exclaiming:

"Hold, enough! old chap. You'll soon come to the end of our bag at that rate. You might as well feed an elephant with bluebottles as try to stay a crocodile's appetite with ducks. In the case of his lordship it is quite evident that *l'appetit vient en mangeant*; he'd go on eating for ever."

'The *peer* then mildly observed that we had been playing practical jokes with the Lord of the Lagoon quite long enough, and suggested the advisability of our providing him immediately with a substantial meal.

"Practical jokes! You old blackguard!" retorted Spencer angrily. "Do you call feeding that ugly beast with ducks a practical joke? The pleasantry, if such it is intended to be, is very ill-timed, and I advise you not to repeat it. Be off out of this!" he continued, as the *peer* made no response, "or I'll hasten your movements. If the Lord of the Lagoon doesn't make himself scarce too I'll give him a dose that'll spoil his digestion for a month of Sundays;" saying which he reached for his gun.

'The *peer*, by a rapid signal with his arm, caused the crocodile to sink out of sight, and then strode away muttering curses on the impious *feringhi* who had dared to insult one of the faithful.

'Lall Mohammed, who had witnessed this scene, now came forward, with a terrified expression on his face, and earnestly begged us to apologise to the *peer*, and to make the customary offering to the Lord of the Lagoon, lest some calamity should befall us. The *shikari*, like all his fellow-countrymen, stood in abject dread of the *peer*, and believed the crocodile was an evil spirit sent by God to avenge the death of the martyred Moulah Bux. The poor fellow, with tears in his eyes, implored us to conciliate the *peer* by buying a goat from him, adding naively that the Lord of the Lagoon preferred animals selected from the flock of the holy man.

'Here then was the key to the mystery! That unconscionable scoundrel the *peer* was enriching himself by playing on the credulity and ignorance of the villagers. He was an impostor of the deepest dye, who, in the furtherance of his own sordid schemes, was blasphemously pretending to be an instrument of the Almighty.

'In the midst of our conversation with the *shikari* we were suddenly startled by hearing the loud piercing scream of a woman in mortal agony. Seizing our guns and running in the direction of the sound, we saw a crowd of bathers scrambling hurriedly up the steps of the bathing *ghat*, tumbling over one another in their fright. Half in, half out of the water, clutching desperately at the slippery steps, was a young woman with the blood streaming from her leg, which had been snapped off just above the knee by the crocodile. How we wished then that we had acceded to the *peer's* request! Little had we suspected that the price of our refusal would be a human life!

'A crimson, rippling circle on the surface of the water showed where the monster had disappeared. Having carried the unconscious victim to her home, and assisted in binding up the injured limb, we sallied forth to wreak revenge on the Lord of the Lagoon. Loading our guns with ball, we paraded the banks of the tank the whole afternoon, in vain hopes of getting a shot at his lordship. When at last, tired and dispirited, we returned to our encampment we were met by the

peer, who asked, with a covert sneer, whether we had had a successful afternoon's sport. I was about to retort angrily when Spencer, seized with a sudden inspiration, restrained me, saying: "Don't let him see that you are annoyed. I've just thought of a plan by which I think I shall be able to turn the tables on him in an eminently practical and satisfactory manner. Remember that I belong to the scientific corps, a part of whose business it is to destroy obstacles. The particular obstacle now in my mind's eye is the Lord of the Lagoon."

'Addressing the holy man, he said in dulcet tones: "I desire, O peer! to apologise humbly for my rudeness to you this morning; and I trust that you may find it in your heart to pardon me for forgetting the respect due to age and piety. Verily, I have sinned; but, believe me, I am repentant. Fain would I, too, make amends for having spoken disparagingly of your sacred charge, the Lord of the Lagoon, for having doubted his immortality, for having sought after his destruction. Now know I that he is indeed immortal; and have not I had convincing proof of the truth of your words that he is ready to anger? I am anxious to appease his lordship's displeasure, and to avert, if possible, the calamity that may befall me in consequence of my imprudent speech and action. Tell me, I beseech you, O peer! if it be not too late, whether there are any means by which I may atone for the sacrilege of which, alas! I have been guilty."

"You have spoken well, young man!" answered the peer in tones of grave approval. "Repentance comes never too late. The Lord of the Lagoon is hungry still. Feed him, and your sins shall be forgiven. In my fold is a goat, plump and tender, the chosen one of the flock, whose price is only twenty rupees. Buy him, and offer him as a sacrifice to the Lord of the Lagoon. Thus, O youth! can you make fitting atonement for your indiscretion. I have spoken."

"Right you are, old cock! It's a deal," said Spencer, delighted at finding the bait so easily swallowed; and, lapsing irreverently into his ordinary commonplace style of conversation, "here are the dibs. Hand over the *bakri* (goat) to Lall Mohammed, and I'll let you know when the feast is ready."

'Accompanied by the *shikari*, the peer, pouching the coins with business-like promptitude, departed, chuckling at the success of his negotiations with the infidels.

'Meanwhile Spencer filled a soda-water bottle with gunpowder, and inserted therein a slow fuse attached to the cork. After the goat had been slain and cut up, and Lall Mohammed had been despatched to summon the peer, the soda-water bottle was wrapped round with layers of flesh, the whole being secured by string, and a small aperture left through which to light the fuse.

"Isn't that a dainty dish to set before a

king?" sang Spencer blithely while putting the finishing-touches to his infernal machine. "I'm sorry I haven't a turkey and a plum-pudding to offer to his lordship for his Christmas dinner," he continued; "but as those commodities are not to be had at Kaimanpore I have devised a substitute wherewith to tickle his noble palate. If the scaly varmint is suffering from depression of spirits I guess this morsel will rouse him up, elevate him, make him feel rather above himself. What do you think, Plugger?"

"I think," replied I, "that his lordship stands an excellent chance of being transported skywards, and I wish him joy of his aerial voyage. If your scientific operations be attended with the success they deserve, you ought to be rewarded with a V.C. at least."

"Virtue will be its own reward," returned my friend sententiously. "Meanwhile, tell the peer to summon the guest of the evening!"

"*Khāna taiyar hai*" (dinner is ready), shouted I to the holy man, who, surrounded by a crowd of villagers, was standing at a little distance from our encampment, awaiting the signal to approach. At the first blast of the horn the Lord of the Lagoon appeared close to the bank, and thrust his hideous snout out of the water. Then the fun commenced.

'The meal was served in courses. First the head of the slaughtered goat, and then, in quick succession, the shoulders, quarters, and legs disappeared like magic down the capacious maw of the hungry saurian. Still the Lord of the Lagoon, like Oliver Twist, asked for more.

"His lordship has a fine healthy appetite," remarked Spencer affably to the peer. "It rejoices my heart to see him enjoy his meal with such evident relish. I have reserved for his dessert a special delicacy, prepared by my own hands, which, if I mistake not, will fill him to bursting."

"Your generosity, young man," said the peer courteously, "exceeds that of Hatim Tai. May your shadow never grow less!"

'Spencer, returning into his tent, and applying a match to the fuse in the soda-water bottle, ran to the edge of the tank and threw the innocent-looking junk of meat fair and square into the jaws of the crocodile.

"Run for your lives! Run for your lives! The devil is coming out of the water!" I shouted to the assembled villagers, who tarried not to verify the accuracy of my statement, but fled panic-stricken in every direction.

'Spencer and I had just gained the shelter of a small knoll when there was a tremendous explosion, a yawning rift was opened in the bosom of the water, and the air was filled with fragments of crocodile.

'The spell was broken; the reign of the peer was at an end. After the tragic death of his protégé the holy man left Kaimanpore, never to return. Whither he went and what became of

him no one knows. Brown babies now gambol fearlessly among the shallows of the tank, where formerly to venture was certain death. To this day the villagers speak with reverential awe of the miracle worked by the *janeer* (Royal Engineer) *sahib*, who slew the Lord of the Lagoon and thus

caused the curse of Allah to be removed from Kaimanpore.

'From a piece of his lordship's hide were made two cigar cases, one you see before you, the other is in the possession of General Sir Jabez Spencer, K.C.B., R.E.'

## ELECTRICITY FOR TOWING-WORK.

By J. E. WHITBY.



THE revolution which electricity has brought about follows its course, and there is no doubt will end by transforming all means of transport. The horse has almost entirely disappeared from our tramway service, is threatened with banishment from our streets, and is now to be superseded on our towing-paths. While there are many who will regret the doom falling on 'the friend of man,' and who may sigh over the probable loss of picturesqueness, there are few who do not recognise the enormous advantages gained by the use of the new motive-power; and it is this universal recognition of its enormous utility that will make its general adoption only a question of time.

The electric traction-engine for canal-work has been for some little time attracting the attention not only of specialists, but indeed of the ordinary public. Since 1893 many experiments have been made with such machines for towing purposes, and with so great a success that in France, where the system of M. Denifle, of Paris, has been in use for more than a year, towing by this means is to be extended for yet another fifty miles. Germany has been carefully studying the question of electric-traction on canals by means of a rack-railway running along the banks; and Belgium is about to inaugurate the system on the Canal du Charleroi, in the neighbourhood of Brussels, which will, it is hoped, be in working order during the summer of the present year. The system proposed, however, has not the simplicity of that in use in the Department du Nord, France, where rails are dispensed with (a small dynamo being placed in the body of the tractor), and the pathway left free, consequently, for the use of pedestrians and vehicles. This method, which allows the machine the greatest liberty of movement, instead of destroying the surface of the road—as the feet of horses are bound to do, especially in bad weather—actually benefits it; as the wheels act as rollers, transforming the way into a cycling-path fit for the most fastidious of riders; while its picturesque aspect is in no way changed. The machines work with the greatest possible ease along the banks, and are manœuvred with facility; they easily avoid obstacles, increase or retard their speed at

a touch, and do their work with twice the speed of a horse. They, moreover, move silently.

The Belgian plan exhibits one marked characteristic—it will have only one generating electric station, which will serve not only to supply the necessary motive-power to the traction-engine, but will enable electric-light to be supplied to any neighbouring village or even hamlet, at as moderate a price as that enjoyed by large towns. The installation of the Charleroi Canal electric-traction is directed by M. Léon Gerard, late of the Brussels University, whose studies have been principally directed to the transmission of this force at long distances. The route taken by the engine is to be about thirty miles, though we may confidently expect that in time the entire service of canal haulage will be worked by this particular motive-power. The engine has three wheels, the two back ones being the motive wheels. The front one of this tricycle is the guiding wheel, which is manœuvred from behind by a driver ensconced in a covered shelter, which contains the starting and directing apparatus, the break, and the drag. The traction-cable is attached to the framework of the carriage, and draws by means of two trolleys running on wire the electric force from the aerial line which, supported on wooden posts, is placed along the canal banks. It is, in fact, practically the same as the overhead system in use for tramways in many large towns. The tow-line is fixed laterally to the framework of the engine.

### TO ME YOUR HEART IS MUTE.

To me your heart is mute; all pleading words,

All passionate prayers of mine are breathed in vain;

I have no power to make its silent chords

Tremble with exquisite joy or tender pain.

Yet, soon or late, Life's paths for you will change,

As if by witchery, to enchanted ways;

A wondrous radiance, new and sweet and strange,

Will cast its subtle glamour o'er the days.

It may be when the year is growing old,

Or at the time that purple violets blow;

It may be 'mid the summer's green and gold,

Or when the blossoms sleep beneath the snow—

The Prince will come, and with his magic key

Unlock your heart and set its music free.

E. MATHESON.